

# PRESS RELEASE

## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan  
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary  
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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### Conyers Criticizes President's Homeland Security Proposal

Rep. John Conyers issued the following statement regarding President Bush's proposal to create a new cabinet level Department of Homeland Security:

"The President's initiative constitutes yet another in a long line of measures which will disparage law abiding immigrants while doing little to increase our nation's security. I have several concerns with the proposal:

First, the idea of placing our nation's entire immigration apparatus in an agency whose mission is security is a non-starter. Reviewing sensitive matters such as asylum from the point of view of homeland security makes little sense to anyone with any sensitivity to immigrants' needs. We are a nation of immigrants, and individuals facing persecution deserve an unbiased review of their case, which will be difficult to receive in a new agency with a narrow mission focused on excluding immigrants.

Second, the proposal does nothing to reform or reorganize the two most critical elements of our security apparatus – the FBI and the CIA. Every day brings with it a new revelation of confusion and discord by these agencies. Creating a new agency with no authority over our intelligence agencies ignores the very heart of the problem.

Third, like every other security proposal we have seen emanating from the Administration since the tragedies of September 11, this was crafted behind closed doors with the only advance input coming from a select few Republicans. If we are to act in a bipartisan manner, the Administration must stop operating in secret, and begin working with the Congress.

I am concerned that this is a damage control document that was more designed to divert the nation's focus from the problems at the CIA and the FBI than intelligently reorganize our security bureaus. Coming on the heels of announcements by the Attorney General within the last week that he would begin to investigate religious activities without any cause and profile Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants, this constitutes yet another devastating blow to civil liberties and civil rights."